

the Social Security Administration's 75-year solvency test. In fact, the economists suggest that if we were able to put this bill into law, it would keep Social Security solvent forever. It is not going to reduce the existing benefits for current retirees or near-term retirees. It is something we need to look at if we are serious about saving Social Security.

The time has passed for just talking and rhetoric. Let us do something about it. Mr. Speaker, I hope that every American voting next year will be asking their candidates for the President and the Congress what their plan is to save Social Security and really put it first.

#### THE MESSAGE IS, WE WANT TO CHANGE HOW WASHINGTON WORKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing one of America's most diverse districts, representing the south side of Chicago, the south suburbs in Cook and Will Counties, bedroom communities like Morris and a lot of cornfields and farm towns, too. When one represents such a diverse district, they learn to listen. I find even though I represent city and suburbs and country, that there is a common message and that message is we want to change how Washington works. They want us to work together to find solutions and meet the challenges that we face.

Now, a question is often asked from a historical perspective: Has this Congress in the last 5 years of the Republican majority responded to that call to change how Washington works and, of course, look for solutions and enact solutions to the challenges that we face?

I am proud to say that in the last 5 years, we have. I was told when I was first elected to Congress there is no way we can balance the budget. They failed to do it for 28 years. There is no way we can cut taxes and balance the budget at the same time. They told us that the welfare system which had put more children in poverty than ever before had failed for a long time so nobody can fix that either, but I am proud to say that we did.

We balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years and now we are debating what to do with the projected \$3 trillion surplus. We cut taxes for the middle class and, in my home State, that first middle class tax cut in 16 years now means that 3 million Illinois children qualify for the \$500 per child tax credit. That is \$1.5 billion a year that stays home in Illinois, helping Illinois families, rather than being spent here in Washington.

We enacted the first real welfare reform in over a generation, emphasizing

work and family and responsibility. As a result of that, Illinois' welfare rolls have been cut in half.

Those are successes, accomplishments that I am proud of and proud to be part of. That is pretty good. People often say the budget was balanced, taxes for the middle class were cut, welfare reform was enacted, but that is history. What is going to be done next?

Our agenda here in the Republican majority is a simple agenda. We want to strengthen our local schools. We want to pay down the national debt. We want to lower taxes for middle class families. We also want to strengthen our retirement security system of Medicare and Social Security. Our agenda responds to the concerns that I often hear. Whether in the union halls, the steel working union halls in the 10th Ward of Chicago or the VFW or Legions in Joliet or the grain elevators in Tonica or Ottawa, I am often asked several questions. One of the most basic questions I am asked time and time again is, when are the folks in Washington going to stop spending the Social Security surplus? When are the folks in Washington going to break that bad habit that has gone on for 30 years, where Washington has dipped into the Social Security trust fund, raided the Social Security trust fund to spend on other things?

I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that our goal as Republicans is to stop the raid on Social Security.

I am proud to say that the White House has recognized this. At the beginning of the year, of course, the President called for spending 62 percent of the Social Security surplus on Social Security and then the other 38 percent on other priorities. Well, we said no; it is time to stop the raid on Social Security.

I was pleased to see this quote here from the chief of staff of the President when they finally recognized that Republicans were serious about stopping the raid on Social Security. Let me quote John Podesta, chief of staff to the President. The Republican's key goal is not to spend the Social Security surplus. Republicans want to stop the raid on Social Security.

I am pleased to say that just a few weeks ago that the Congressional Budget Office, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, issued a letter saying that the budget that we have enacted, the budget that we have passed even though the President vetoed part of it, did not spend one dime of the Social Security trust fund.

The other question I am often asked by folks back home is no one ever talks about paying down the national debt. Washington spent beyond its means for 28 years, running up a \$3.4 trillion national debt. Is it not time to start paying that off?

I am proud to say that over the last 2 years we have made a down payment on paying down the national debt. We paid down \$150 billion of the public debt over the last 2 years; \$50 billion 2

years ago, \$100 billion this past year. This coming year we expect to pay down \$150 billion and over the next 10 years we should pay down two-thirds of the national debt, \$2.2 trillion. It is an important step as we work to pay down the debt which is so important if we consider our future for America's children.

The third question I am often asked is, and folks get frustrated, they are frustrated that our Nation's tax burden is so high, that only in time of war, in World War II, at the end of World War II, was the tax burden higher than it is today. Forty percent of the average Illinois' income goes to Washington and Springfield.

Unfortunately, the President vetoed our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. My hope is we will come back and do that.

Mr. Speaker, let us stop the raid on Social Security. Let us balance the budget. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty. Let us help our schools and let us strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

#### THE CASE OF LINDA SHENWICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, there are times when Congress must act to protect the interests of individuals, in particular Federal civil servants who have been unfairly harmed by the actions of the Federal Government.

Recently, Congress acted to protect Billy Dale and the other employees of the White House Travel Office who were unfairly removed from their jobs and who were illegally targeted for investigation and prosecution. This Congress acted to protect those workers and to pay for their legal expenses.

Another case has presented itself that behooves Congressional action also. The case I speak of is the case of Linda Shenwick. Linda Shenwick has been an exemplary public servant since she started working at the State Department in 1979. The Weekly Standard reported that Ms. Shenwick was driven by a sense of public service and an interest in foreign affairs.

In 1984, Ms. Shenwick was transferred to the U.S. mission to the United Nations where she first was assigned to handle personnel and budget issues. She quickly carved out a reputation for diligence and hard work, which won her three consecutive outstanding ratings, the highest given, between 1987 and July of 1989. Her performance also won her regular promotions and in 1988 she was admitted to the Senior Executive Service, an elite corps of Federal civil servants.

In August 1991 and again in November 1993, representatives of the other U.N. member states elected Shenwick to serve on the influential Advisory Committee on Administrative and